



Ministry
of Defence

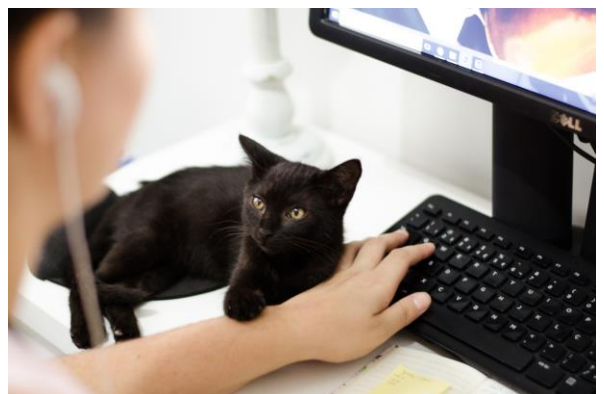


How to support your mental health

Advice and ideas

How to support your Mental Health

Looking after our mental health and wellbeing can help us deal with and manage difficult times. You can support your mental health by first being aware of the things that can cause you poor wellbeing. You can then take steps to prevent or mitigate the impact of those stressors, but also employ more proactive techniques to enhance your mental fitness and build resilience. It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to ask for support if you need it.





Tips and ideas

Stay connected

If you're working from home or self-isolating you can keep connected to your team with regular contact through phone calls, instant messaging and video calls (e.g. Skype, Zoom). But outside of work make sure you stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media.

Get good sleep

Try to maintain a regular sleep schedule and ensure your bedroom creates optimal sleeping conditions. Your room should be the right temperature between 15 to 22 degrees Celsius, and free from noise and light. Don't nap during the day and limit exposure to bright light and screen usage in the hour before you intend to sleep. The [NHS](#) and [Mental Health Foundation](#) have dedicated advice pages. For those who need more personalised support you can access "[Sleep Station](#)" through The Charity for Civil Servants website.



Tips and ideas

Think positively

Stay Positive, challenge any unhelpful or negative thoughts and focus on the things that you *can* control. Stay informed but consider limiting your information to fixed times and credible sources such as [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and [PHE](https://www.phe.gov.uk) websites. Consider having a break from social media and 'mute' conversations or key words or unfollow pages or people if you are finding them too overwhelming.

Challenge yourself

Setting yourself goals and challenges, whether at work or outside, helps build confidence and self-esteem. The [Open University website](https://www.open.ac.uk) has a large catalogue of free courses to gain new skills and knowledge. Civil Servants can access lots of online learning through [Civil Service Learning](https://www.civilservicelearning.gov.uk) or, where available, its new [platform](https://www.civilservicelearning.gov.uk), which is being rolled out across TLBs during April and May. If you haven't yet got a CSL account, it is recommended you sign up to the new platform.



Tips and ideas

Take some 'me' time

If you are going to be in your home for an extended period, it is important you plan breaks in your working day and organise activities you're interested in at night. It might be the chance to work through your personal to-do list or take up a new hobby.

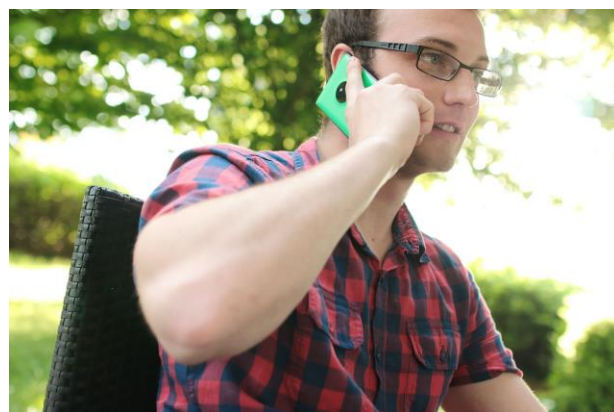
Help other people who need it

Evidence suggests that helping others, such as those who are vulnerable or self-isolating, or doing other community work, can be linked to positive wellbeing. Do be mindful around maintaining your personal health whilst doing so. The [WHO Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak guidance](#) gives useful information on how to protect yourself and be supportive of others. There is advice on volunteering policies for civilians and military colleagues available on defnet.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Tools

HeadFIT is a set of online resources (text, image and video content) that help you to develop a proactive approach to mental fitness. It is made up of a series of tools or activities that can be easily incorporated into your day-to-day routine with the aim of establishing healthy habits that will, in turn, help you to unlock your potential, achieve personal goals and reach optimal well-being. Use the HeadFIT tools to improve your [drive](#), [confidence](#), [mood](#) and how you [de-stress](#).

[Employee Assistance Programme \(Health Assured\)](#) The EAP service is a confidential service for civil servants, designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home or work life, health and general wellbeing. It provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues.
Tel: 0800 345 7047



Mental Health and Wellbeing Tools

[Stress Assessment and Stress Reduction Tool](#)

This tool is based on information from the Health and Safety Executive website, and helps staff and managers to assess the risks of work-related stress within a job role and identify any areas of concern.

This [5 Step Wellbeing Conversation Tool](#) takes the principles of this tool to help managers have wellbeing focused conversations with their colleagues.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Tools

The NHS website has a calming [breathing exercise](#) to help with stress and anxiety.

Anxiety UK has developed advice and support online via their website blogs: [health and other forms of anxiety](#) and [COVID-19 and anxiety](#).

They give helpful tips on what to do when self-isolating to protect your mental wellbeing and how to deal with mental health issues such as anxiety disorders.

MOD also has an 8 week [Mindfulness Course](#) available to all staff.



Medical Support

For military personnel, you can still get support at medical centres. Appointments or consultations are being conducted by telephone where possible. In addition some Medical Centres are introducing online consultation, via [econsult](#). Visit the site on your laptop, tablet or mobile device and simply enter the name of your medical centre.

To prevent the spread of Coronavirus, **do not** visit your medical centres or PCRf; if you have a temperature or cough or have had contact with somebody with these symptoms follow government guidance on self-isolation.

You must inform your line manager if you are having to self-isolate.

For all Coronavirus concerns please follow Public Health England and NHS guidance available online at: <http://111.nhs.uk/>

